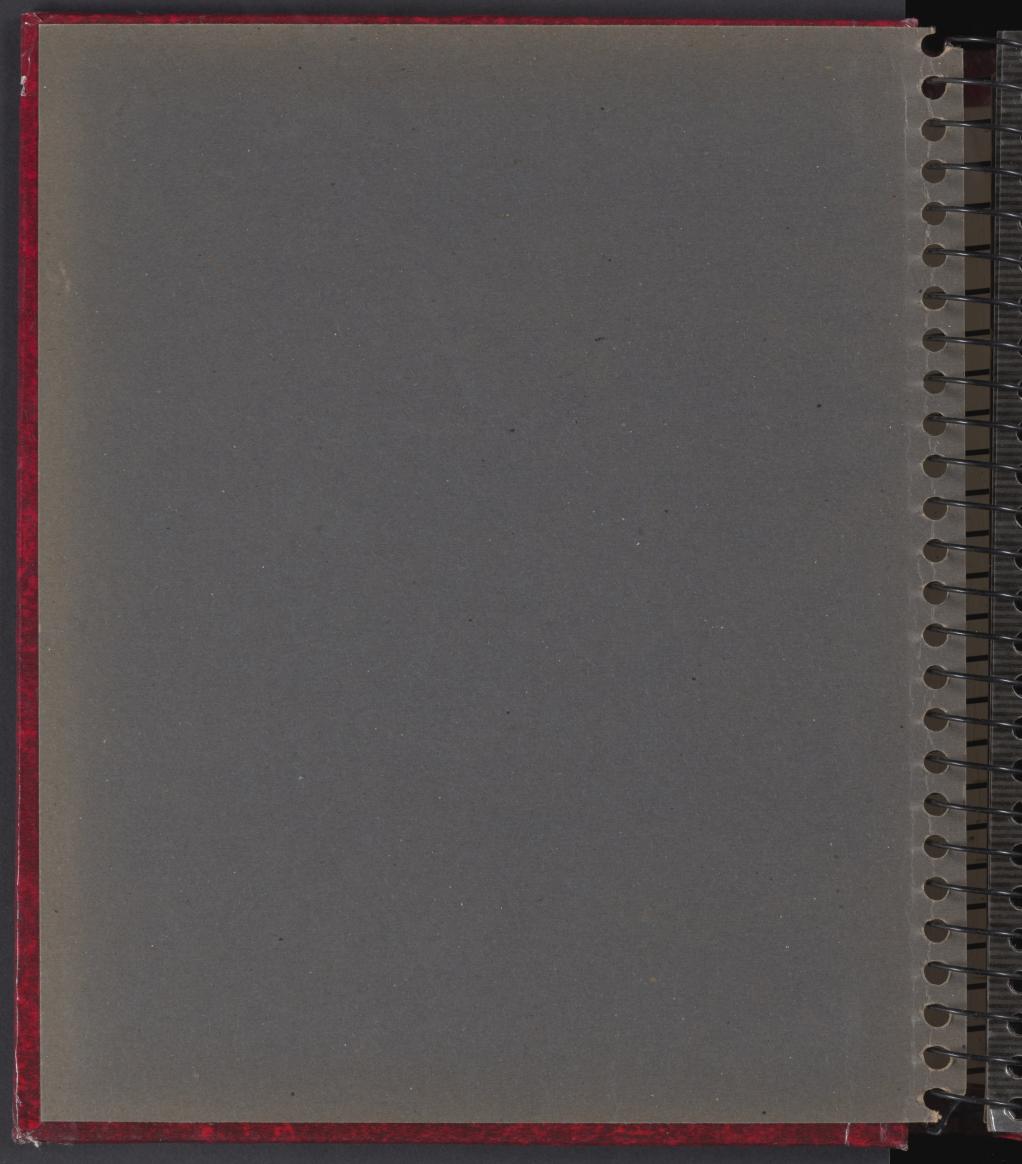
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RED PHOTOGRAPH AND SCRAPBOOK ALBUM

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Sending a boy to do a dyke's job

Editor, State Hornet,

When your entertainment editor sent Charles Moore to review Cowdykes At The Lavender Corral she sent a boy to do a dyke's job.

Charles Moore's mistake in reviewing a gay women's play is that he is too inexperienced to understand political satire. Furthermore he has no understanding of the theme of Cowdykes which he believes is about the "problems of gay women." It is not! Cowdykes is a satire about the characters who are blind to their own intolerance towards individual's differences. The lesbian feminist marshall believes her reality to be more "right - on" than the other characters, and she attempts to prove her superiority with rational, rhetorical put - downs. The underlying theme which runs rampant throughout Cowdykes is "I am more revolutionary than thou and therefore better."

Charles Moore chose to interpret our satire by the literal meaning of words uttered by the characters, and he came up with a liberal's attempt to be understanding of a minority's problems. (Token Straight was right: "liberal guilt is a heavy burden to carry") Pat Pitts' speeches were intended as bullshit (circular arguments), certainly not be received as "valid political points."

From the feedback we got from other heterosexual audience members they indicated they understood we were making fun of

those persons in our ranks rather than being offensive to straights. I believe Charles Moore interpreted the play from a defensive straight male's position. Feeling threatened, he believed what he heard rather than realizing that M. Lavelle Nelson's "tongue - in - cheek performance" was meant to deliver the authors' tongue - in - cheek message.

Furthermore, just because heterosexual Moore did not appreciate of understand the humor of the play that is not to say that there weren't heterosexuals who were entertained by the SATIRE. No one has a monopoly on humor (it's in such demand today), especially critics who are not noted for their sense of humor. Saturday night an elderly couple attended the play and I noticed they laughed and laughed. They understood the humor and they were not gay nor were they previous fans or groupies of Le Theatre Lesbien.

So in the future please send someone who understands gay women and satire, preferably a lesbian satirist.

Cherie Gordon "Minority" Producer Le Theatre Lesbien



"COWDYKES AT THE LAVENDER CORRAL"

Elizabeth Fisk, left, and Cherie Gordon enjoy some refreshment.

New stereotypes populate Old West in "Cowdykes"

Cowdykes at the Lavender Corral will be presented Sept. 7, 8, 14 and 15 in the Playwright's Theatre by Le Theatre Lesbien.

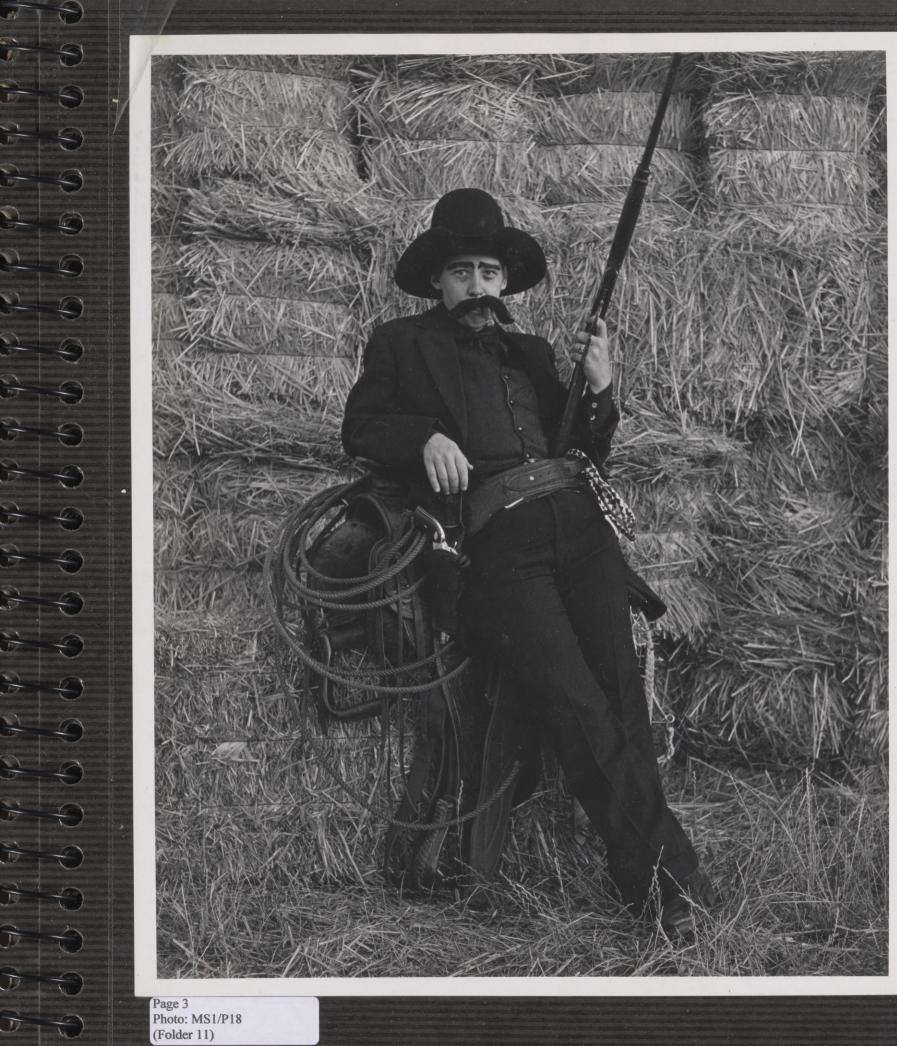
Cowdykes, which was written by La Marc DuChamps and Cherie Gordon, satirizes various stereotypes which abound in the classic and western milieus. The Old West is now home for bar dykes, a talking female horse, a U.S.

feminist marshall and the villainous mayor, Samuel Slime. The plot pits the forces of feminist righteousness against the evils of opposition.

Le Theatre Lesbian's other productions include *Dykes on Parade, The Frog* and *Homophobia.* The current comedy is directed by Elizabeth Priest.

Curtain is 8 p.m. and there is a \$3 admission charge.

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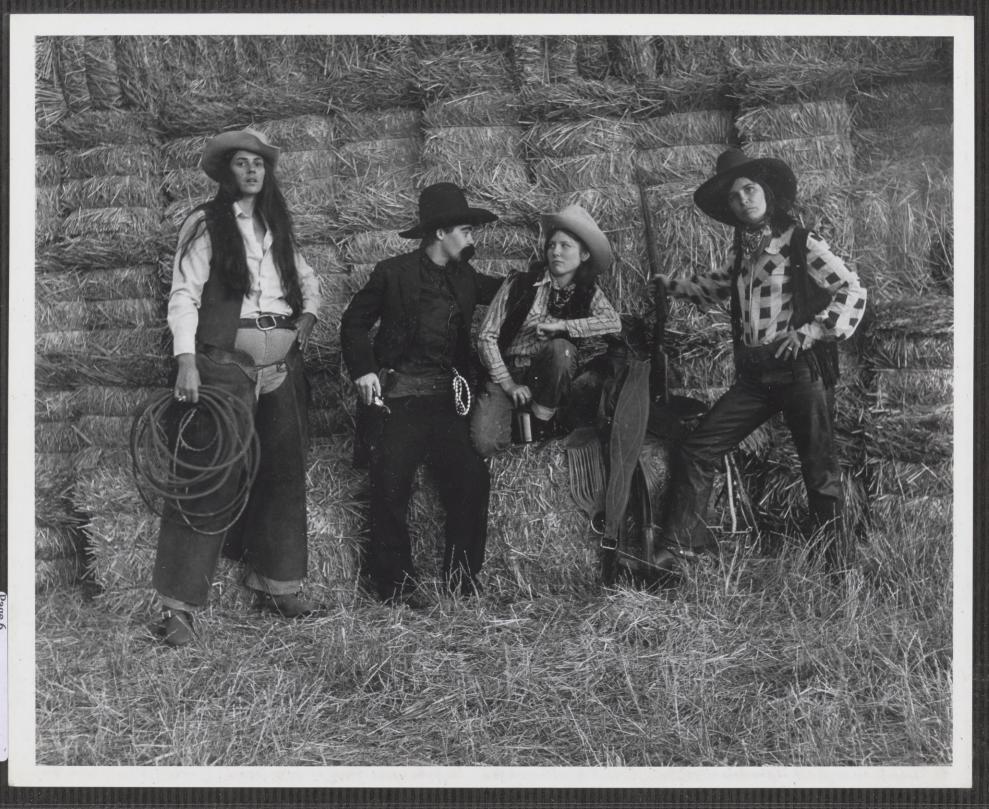




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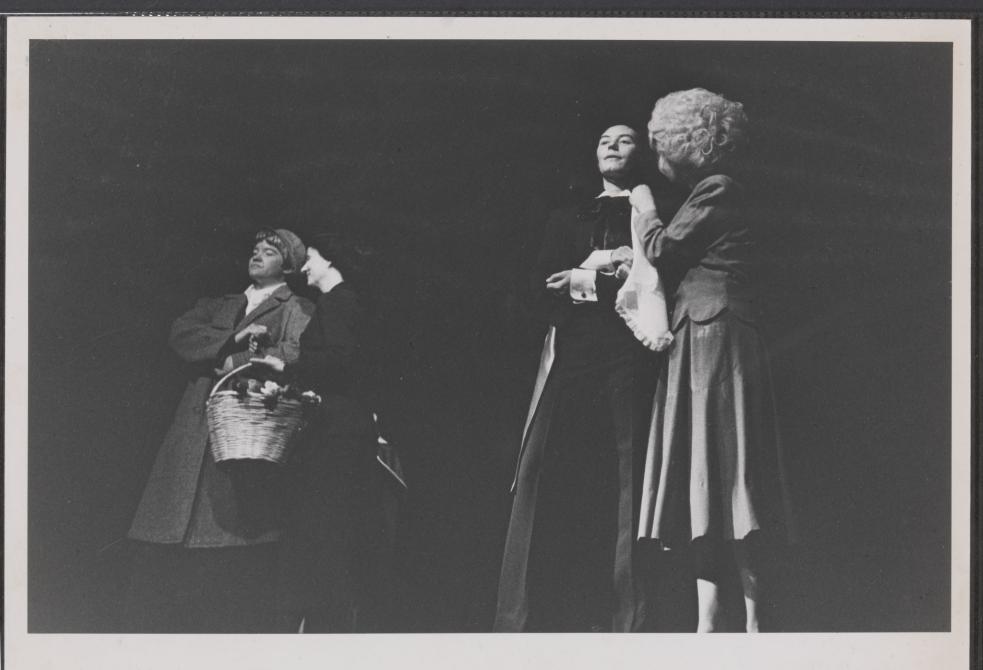


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Dykes on Parade!

by Kathleen Jordon

Sacramento has a partially deserved, partially distorted reputation as a slow unexciting city where people live because it's centrally located. It means that if Sacramentans want some action, some excitement, they have to drive to San Francisco for it.

But this month, a crew of 20 Sacramento women who comprise Le Theatre Lesbien prove that bright lights and good entertainment do not always originate in the big city, when they come to San Francisco with *Dykes on Parade*. Produced by Cherie Gordon and written by the mysterious Madame Szwambi, his show is a satrical revue of lesbians hroughout history. It also parodies current asbian archetypes, ending with a futuristic tmy of lesbians.

I saw the May run of *Dykes on Parade* in acramento. Packed audiences at Sierra neatre viewed a completely original, innotive satire which celebrated lesbian history ough the format of a lesbian fashion bw. Punctuated by spritely skits with rertaining dialogue, *Dykes on Parade* is an remely witty, energetic revue. According Gordon, also the show's director, it is tred to a mixed audience because "it's a bid way to educate the public about the fory and existence of gay women."

he revue proved overwhelmingly that a nmitted political group can and does have use of humor. By laughing at themselves others laugh with them, and the show with a mighty applause, a standing ion, and cries of "Author! Author!" uning the show was the legendary zon, brazenly waving her cross bow and axe. A white gowned Sappho danced



on next as the narrator, Gordon, stated that "Saphho and her sisters dwelled on the island of Lesbos where they ate grapes, scribbled poetry, and had affairs with one another."

There are some obscure historical lesbians such as the two pirates, Anne Bonny and Mary Reed, Queen Christina of Switzerland, and Rene Vivien, a poet who "adopted an outlandish lifestyle that endeared her to degenerates the world over."

Some of the most popular characters of the evening were Collette, a 1950's bar dyke, a 1980's punk dyke, and the steamship set foursome which included Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas.

"Dykes on Parade" appears at the Victoria definitely gives insight into some of the great women of our time, and while the satirical basis of the lyrics and the skits gave the audience something to laugh out loud about, they also gave them a great deal of interesting information to think about after the play was over.

"Dykes on Parade" appears at the Victoria Theatre, in San Francisco Aug 6th & 7th. Doors open at 7:30 & the show begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are on sale at Old Wives Tales Bookstore and are \$6.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children.

THEATER

Parade of Uneven Performances

by Chris Orr

Dykes on Parade, An Hersterical, Herstorical Theatrical Revue of Lesbian Fashions; by Madame Szwambi; directed by Cherie Gordon; at Live Oak Theater, Berkeley, June 18 and 19; Victoria Theater, SF, August 5-7.

Here was the line-up: Sappho, Queen Christina, Colette, Ma Rainey. This "fashion" show was billed to include some of my faves of the past. Of course Gertie and Alice B. were there. And Radclyffe Hall and Lady Una. And then the modern types: a 50's bar dyke, a 60's gym teacher, a 70's disco queen, and a punk. Whew. Director and M.C. Cherie Gordon promised to leave no one unscathed by the sword of satire. Hmm . . The concept was sublime, but the execution was somewhat marred.

Live theater is a risk; for the producers and the audience, but also for the performer. And when the risk works for everybody, when, for instance, the singer reaches that note and the audience perceives that moment of transitory beauty, then you have magic. The magic in *Dykes on Parade* happens in several satisfying places, but the chances are missed in several other key places, and this is what fundamentally affects the show, and its humor.

Highlights of Dykes on Parade were worth the trip to the theater, and are even more worth the while of the cast to refine further. Ma Rainey (Rita Cameron Wedding) made the biggest hit with her gospel flash ("Can I get a witness?") and "Prove It On Me Blues" song. The 50's bar dyke (listed just as "Catherine" in the program notes) had a perfect D.A. and made some hilarious greaser moves on a woman in the front row. Colette (J.L. Larsen) had a charming French accent and irresistible iconoclasm (!). All three actresses stayed in character, in focus, and got outrageous with their portrayals; though Wedding wavered just a little bit. After all, is it really politically correct to appear in a lesbian fashion show? heh.

Self-consciousness affected all the other characters, perhaps illustrating the line between pro and amateur in the theater. The pro relies on her gifts as an artist and practiced survivor to save her when she ventures out on the limb of character identification. The amateurs have a great time, but they giggle a little and don't go so far out. A lot of the show is in the practice, and this one needs some tightening up before it really gets out there and lives up to its concept.

Oddly enough, however, bad acting works at times in comedy and, in this case, is a fine imitation and spoof of fashion models' deadpan mugging as they display their outfits. The stereotypical punk indifferently beheaded a rubber chicken; poet Rene Vivien was divinely decadent on her way to anorexia nervosa. Throughout, fashion guide Cherie Gordon, looking glamorously like a cross between Rita Mae Brown and Nancy Reagan, kept up an informative patter about the women and their clothes.

I felt some ambivalence about the grand finale of the show, though it certainly won loud applause. In it, 'an army of lovers" sang "The Stars and Dykes Forever March" led by Sgt. Sappho and Lt. Lesbos in snappy military suits. The song was great - "Be kind to your lesbian friends/ For a dyke may be somebody's mother . . ." and the impact was even greater (for once the choreography had some crispness), but I'm wary of the trendiness of the military model these days. I did get a big guffaw out of the recruitment officer luring young folks into the lavender corps.

Dykes on Parade will be moving to the Victoria Theater in SF next. If some focus can be brought to the characterizations, and some cuts in the more cliched material (I mean, really, how many jokes can be made about "a rose is a rose?"), then DOP will be even more fun. Entertaining it mostly is; but enlightening it is not yet.

Chris Orr loves a parade.



Reviews

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CHARLAREA REPORTER-TENTER - LIVER - LI

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GRASSROOTS

Le Théâtre Lesbien

DYKESON PARADE

Le Theatre Lesbien presents Dykes on Parade, an hersterical, herstorical theatrical revue of lesbian fashions, written by Madame Szwambi, a local ghost writer; directed by Cherie Gordon and aided by a fine cast of actresses.

The most extraordinary event of the social (or anti-social) season took place at Live Oak Theatre on June 18th and 19th, in the form of Le Theatre Lesbien's "hersterical herstorical" revue of Lesbian fashions. This astonishing production introduced a charming new concept: a parade not only of styles but of lifestyles. Ms. Cherie Gordon, the elegant and of course tasteful fashion guide, presented a stunning array of archetypes and stereotypes, from our hypothetical Amazon foresisters to the equally hypothetical Lavender Army of the future.

The first half of this stunning farce presented a succession of remarkable individuals with equally remarkable wardrobes, ranging from the practical two Butch geniuses (Mses. Stein and Hall) sizing each other up like rival dogs checking out each other's territory.

DYKE STEREOTYPES

The second act of this remarkable production introduced not individuals but archetypes, beginning with those now faded into the past: the 1950's Bar Dyke and the 1960's Gym Teacher. The audience was next treated to a charmingly exaggerated depiction of that belle of modern Lesbianism, the Counter-culture Dyke, moaning her pitiful cry: "Here, Bambi! I won't eat you! I'm a vegetarian!" But even more touching was the dilemma of the Dogma Dyke, torn between conflicting emotions: the need for love and the desire to be politically correct.

With the charmingly horrible appearance of the Punk Dyke, our designers introduced a fantasy element, which continued with three personifications of negative images inflicted on Lesbian fashion by a hostile

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'Dykes on Parade' Delights Audiences

By AMBER STEWART

"Dykes on Parade" was performed at the Sierra II Community Center during two weekends in May. It was billed as an hersterical, herstorical fashion commentary, and hersterical it was!

The opening scene was arresting with the appearance of a huge Amazon warrior, whose size was accentuated with artful lighting. Ma Rainey, a 1950's Bar Dyke, and a 1980's Punk Dyke were all brilliantly cast, and showed that they had put considerable time and effort into their performance; however, the rest seemed to move a bit slowly. The After-Five dance number was poorly choreographed, and the dancers tended to be out-of-step and out-of-time. But interspersed throughout the performance

were lines which, although corny at the time, worked very well.

My overall feeling about the performance was that it was very funny and, aside from my critique, well worth the price of admission. I feel that it is very important to give credit to these wimmin who worked so hard to give Sacramento wimmin an evening's entertainment as an alternative to supporting bars run by males whose hostility toward wimmin is so obvious that they will not even post any literature which contains the word "lesbian."

We need to give credit and support to Cherie Gordon and all of the cast and crew, so that they will continue to bring us these alternatives.



The Punk Dyke enthusiastically displays her greedy appetite for a rubber chicken.



Star Photos by Amber Stewart

The Amazon, towering in shining armor, keeps herself fully abreast of situations.

Reviews

Dykes on Parade

Reviewed by Kitty Roberge

Le Theatre Lesbien's production of Dykes on Parade, which played to four packed houses during its two weekend engagements in May, proved to be one of the more innovative pieces of theatre to play Sacramento in a while. The exuberance of the players was well matched by the excitement of the audience. Madame Szwambi's script, full of good-natured satire and irrepressible humor, gave actresses and audiences alike a chance to cast off that often-present lesbian community seriousness and have fun with each other.

Dykes on Parade is a whirlwind revue of lesbian history-through-clothing from the time of the Amazons to the present. The fashion show format is a wise one for a small theatre production: since each historical segment is only a few minutes long, the few weakly or over-acted segments stood out, their humor enhanced by their brevity.

An especially dazzling performance was given by Rita Cameron Wedding as Ma Rainey. Dressed to kill, "Ma" suddenly appeared in the midst of the near-crazed audience and walloped out a strong rendition of the "Prove it On Me Blues". Equally brilliant was the portrayal of Lady Una Troubridge, daintily played by Susan (For obvious reasons, several of the cast members chose not to use their full names.) Corky Davis gave a stunningly nasty and dynamic performance as the Punk Dyke that left the audience screaming. Jaqueline played a delightfully languid

and anorexic Renee Vivien. Cherie Gordon's excellent narration ran smoothly throughout the show.

Satire is one of the most difficult ypes of writing. Mme. Szwambi's fast-paced script hits more often than t misses. Here we have pirates Anne Bonney and Mary Reed discussing the merits of having one's ''throat slashed by a sister'' and the ever-dowdy Alice B. Toklas assuring her lover that ''even men have heard of the great Gertrude Stein''.

In general, Mme. S is not afraid to poke fun at all types of lesbians. Unfortunately, she falls down a bit during Quaquan the warrior's speech about racism. The tone is strained and over-serious — not in keeping with the rest of the play. It is hard to understand why she does not employ her usual wit and satire — her best weapons — when confronting one of the most important problems facing lesbians today.

The Paris salon segment featuring Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas, Radclyffe Hall and Una Lady Troubridge was one of the strongest and best written segments of the play. The characterizations of the two authors gives a swift kick to overly egotistical and self-important artists everywhere. This otherwise delightful piece was marred by the singing of a weak parody entitled "Everything's Pretty Queer in Paris City". Let it be noted that the lyrics were not of Mme.

Szwambi's writing and lacked her usual subtlety and finesse.

The costumes, brilliantly designed by Flash Gordon Costumes, lent credibility to the fashion show theme with a nice blend of authenticity and imagination. Renee Vivien's kimono and Punk Dyke's black plastic and foxfur ensemble were good examples of the realism. A silver, one-breasted Amazon suit, a marvelous purple "Freak" outfit, complete with bouncing tail, and Ma Rainey's atypical sequined evening gown, graced with a man's necktie, were in perfect whimsical keeping with the rest of the show.

A highly versatile musical score was another plus. Where else can one hear "La Vie En Rose", "This is the Army Mr. Jones", and The Pretenders back to back?

The choreography, by Cherie Gordon and Matrisha One Person, was good enough to keep the fashion show moving smoothly, without becoming repetitive. Overall direction, also by Cherie Gordon, was good — the cast seemed quite well-rehearsed, and the technical crew did a flawless job with lights and sound.

Good alternative theatre productions are not terribly common in Sacramento. Good women's theatre is even harder to find. Le Theatre Lesbien's lively performance of Dykes on Parade is a hopeful sign for amateur theatre in Sacramento.

om...Guess Wha



The Sacramento Star — August 11, 1982

J.L. Larsson as the famous French novelist Colette in "Dykes on Parade," playing at Sierra II on August 20 and 21.

'Dykes On Parade' Returns From Tour, Sets Local Performances August 20-21

"Dykes on Parade." the highly acclaimed production of Le Theatre Lesbien, directed by Cherie Gordon, returns to its hometown of Sacramento on Friday and Saturday, August 20 and 21, playing at the Sierra II Center for the Performing Arts, 2791 24th Street.

The theater will open at 7:30 p.m.

each night and the performance will begin at 8. Ticket prices are \$5 for adults and \$2.50 for children under 12. Free childcare will be provided.

A "light-hearted satire of lesbian herstory and fashion." in the form of a fashion show. "Dykes on Parade" features Sappho. Colette. Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. Natalie Barney, and such archetypes as the 50's Bar Dyke, the 60's Gym Teacher. and the Punk Dyke.

"Dykes on Parade" was created in 1976 by Cherie Gordon, Matrisha One-person, and Madame Szwambi. Revised and rewritten, it returned to the stage in May, playing to enthusiastic response in Sacramento and on tour in the Bay Area. Audiences in Berkeley are reported to have particularly admired it for its self-mocking political humor.*

The Sacramento Star — August 25, 1982 Page 7

Great Moments In Dyke Couture—'Dykes On Parade' Again A Marvelous Trip

Reviewed by VIVIAN WEAVER

A revue of the past, the present, and the possible future of dyke fashion was presented by Le Theatre Lesbien at the Sierra II Center for the Performing Arts on August 20 and 21 with outstanding success.

"Dykes on Parade" was a marvelous trip through a culture of flamboyance and statement narrated humorously by producer/director Cherie Gordon, and highlighted by glimpses of such diverse personages as Sappho, Ma Rainey, and Rosie the Riveter.

The presentation was situation comedy in the guise of a fashion show. It was punctuated with period music, quirky jazz, and engaging songs written by Jenny Pausaker, Madame Szwambi, Matrisha Oneperson, and Cherie Gordon. The narrator presented the ladies, gave a brief herstory of each, and described the costumes that went along with the famous face or type of lifestyle.

Among the great moments in dyke couture were the fashions for the

dowdy worn by Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas and the slimming effects achieved by the anorexic Renee Vivien's black kimono. The characters' lines met with frequent applause as the audience identified with their strength of purpose or affirmed the various lifestyles of their "sheroes."

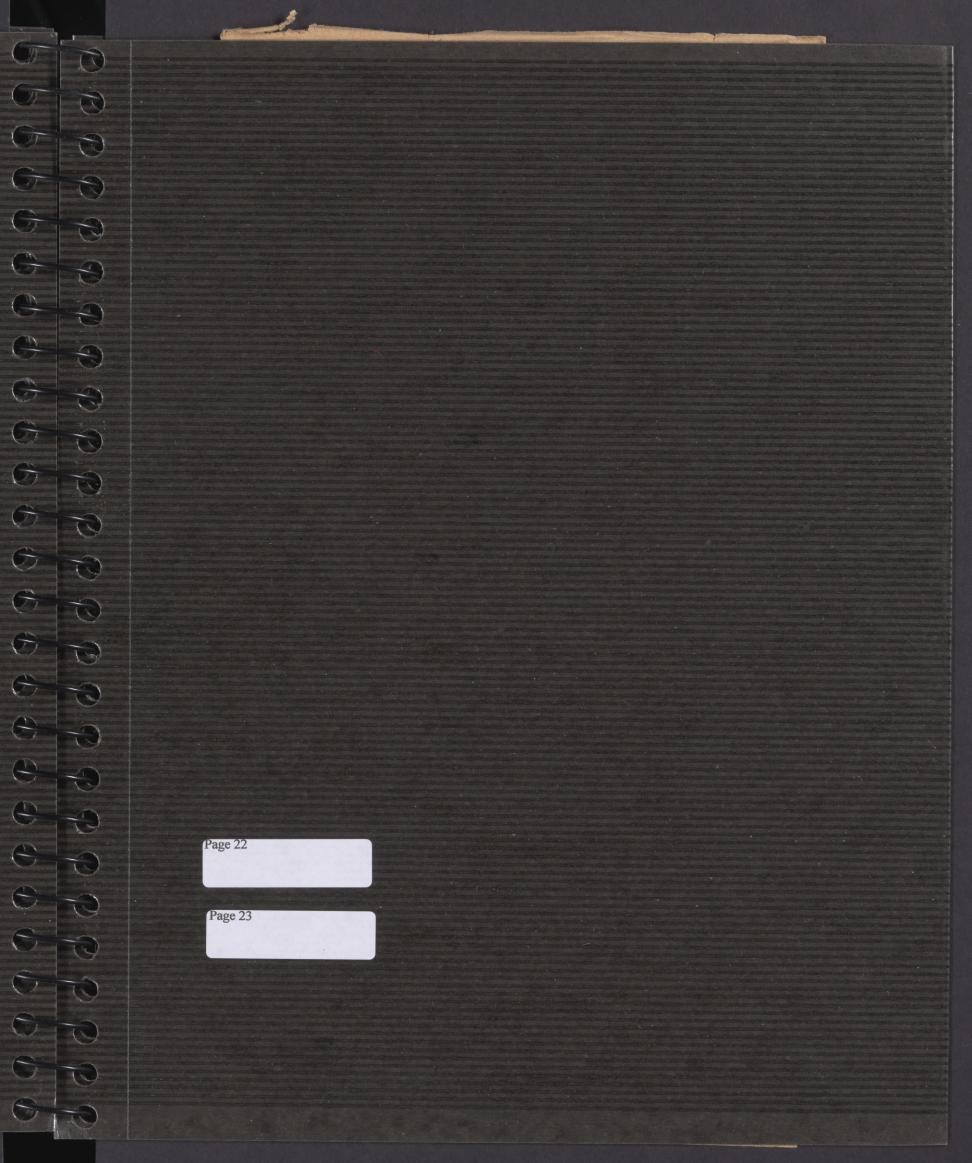
Striking the most responsive chords of the evening were the 50's Bar Dyke, the 60's Gym Teacher (accompanied by Meg Christian's "Ode to a Gym Teacher"), and the Punk Dyke, all zippers, safety pins, and stiletto heels to make her fashion point perfectly clear.

"Dykes on Parade" was created in 1976 by Cherie Gordon, Matrisha Oneperson, and Madame Szwambi. It has been touring California since its revival here in May. Its success on tour induced the troupers to bring it back to Sacramento for two more performances to full houses.

With such excellent and exuberant endeavors behind Le Theatre Lesbien, their growing audience eagerly awaits future innovative and entertaining productions.*

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Day By Night



Sacramento's Le Theatre Lesbien will return with the production "Dykes On Parade," a light-hearted satire of lesbian herstory and fashion. The performances will be held at the Sierra II Center on August 20 and 21 at 8pm. See "Theatre" listings for details.

Theatre

Dykes On Parade

time here in Sacramento upon its homecoming Friday night. It was a bit heartbreaking, really, for much of the trouble was out of the control of the director and technical crew. However, some of the trouble definitely was attributable to the script and the acting.

Perhaps I was expecting too much, what with rave reviews pouring out of the Bay Area after recent stagings of the show at theaters there, and all. In June, the show sold out two days in Berkeley; in August, two days in San Francisco. Director Cherie Gordon of Sacramento was garnering enthusiasm and praise wherever she took the production.

That's why I call Friday night's show a homecoming. But despite the literally glowing reception the play acquired in the past, it drew a disappointing number of people Friday night, and in many ways was a disappointing show.

But it did receive a standing

"Dykes on Parade" is a fashion show dressed up as a play. It's made up of a series of short performances by about a dozen women, many of whom portray as many as four differ-

"Dykes on Parade" had a bad ent characters. Narrated by director Gordon, "Dykes on Parade" takes the audience on an entertaining trip through history by tracing the development of women's fashions. It's dubbed "an hersterical, herstorical revue of lesbian fashions."

> It'a a novel idea, and it works to a degree, but there are a few weaknesses. To succeed, this show needs outstanding performers capable of pulling off a variety of roles. It needs serious performers, even if the play itself is a farce of sorts. It needs performers who are able to entertain but who aren't so aware of the audience that they become hams competing for laughs.

In this aspect, it was lacking. The players were entertaining-even enthusiastic -- but they weren't serious. For the most part, it seemed that they were just up there having fun. Now, that wasn't too bad, because the audience had fun with them. But a "fun" show isn't necessarily a quality show, and having "fun" at a comic production doesn't make it particularly "funny."

A few exceptions: J. L. Larsson was excellent in every one of her four roles. She was a sensous Sappho, a charming Colette, a convincingly disciplinarian 1960's gym teacher, and a perfectly adoring Alice B. Toklas, longtime companion of writer Gertrude Stein. In fact, one of the highlights of the show was a segment which featured Larsson as Toklas, Ellen Mareia as Stein. Terry Thespian as Una Lady Troubridge and A. Shrink as Radclyffe Hall. It consisted of dialogue going on around Stein as she struggles to find the perfect subject for her famous phrase "A is a

This scene opens with a musical number (sung by the four mentioned above) titled "Everything's Pretty Queer In Paris City." It was an effective spoof: "Everything's pretty queer in Paris City; we've gone about as dyke as we can go."

Another exception: Rita Cameron Wedding as famous blues singer Gertrude "Ma" Rainey. Wedding sings the outstanding number in the show, "Prove It On Me Blues," written by Ma Rainey. Wedding's voice is pleasant and exciting to listen to and became stronger as the song progressed. She seemed a bit nervous at first and then loosened up and really let us hear her.

She's also quite stunning to watch; she really took the audience back into the blues era and was the most convincing of the performers in the show.

Another weakness, this one not the director's or script's fault, was the sound. For the first ten minutes, narrator Gordon literally had to shout,



because, for some reason, her microphone wasn't working. When it was finally turned on, the audience clapped and cheered.

But that didn't alleviate the problem. People in the front rows were faced with another one. Seemed the sound system was picking up a radio station, and the broadcast was coming in clearly on the speakers at the front of the stage. This was continually distracting the audience's attention from the narrator and the actresses.

The costumes, or fashions, however, were spectacular. Gordon owns a costume shop called Flash Gordon Costumes, and it is evident that weeks of hard work went into the characters' attire. Credit should also be given to wardrobe technicians Ken Kile and Kermit Hermes.

None of the costumes failed to portray the intended idea.

Another strong point was the use of limited lighting equipment to achieve excellent effects. Primarily dependent upon colors and blends of colors, the lighting designer, identified only as "Ski" in the program, should also be congratulated.

"Dykes on Parade" was entertaining, but failed to be extremely exciting. Its best quality was its uniqueness, its daring. It is entertaining because it is unpredictable and clever. Friday night's audience screamed and yelled during curtain calls, probably out of both appreciation for the play itself and sheer joy at being offered something relevant to its views.

-- Susan Bryer

Le Theatre Lesbien

A light-hearted satire of Lesbian 'herstory' and fashion will be featured in Sacramento's Le Theatre Lesbien's production 'Dykes on Parade' to be presented at the Sierra 2 Center, 2791 24th St., Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. Among those starring in the updated edition of the 1976 spoof is J.L. Larsson, right, as French novelist Colette. 'Dykes on Parade,' written by Cherie Gordon, Matrisha One Person and Madame Szwambi, has been touring Northern California. Tickets will be available at the door at \$5 for adults and \$2.50 for children under 12. Free child care will be provided.



Dreadful Is Best Word For 'Dykes'

By Robert A. Masullo Bee Reviewer

READFUL.

There, in a word, is all that really needs to be said about "Dykes on Parade," the production of Le Theatre Lesbien that took place twice at the Sierra 2 Center this past weekend.

Certainly there are Italians who

Theater Review

cannot sing; blacks who have no sense of rhythm, and homosexuals who have no affinity for the arts whatsoever. That should not surprise anyone.

Fortunately, the Italians and blacks without their respective cliche talents have not taken to the stage to prove they don't have them. The same, alas, cannot be said of gays of the feminine persuasion.

"Dykes on Parade" is an assemblage



A pirate from 'Dykes on Parade.'

of as inept writing, producing and acting as one is likely to see anywhere. This assessment, I reluctantly feel obliged to add, has nothing whatsoever to do with sexual orientation.

The show — and it hardly merits even that description, but we've got to call it something — purports to be "an hersterical, herstorical theatrical re-vue of lesbian fashions." What it actually is is an endless, boring parade of female characters, many of whom have no genuine identification with lesbianism.

That's it. No interaction. No development. Nothing even remotely theat-

Cherie Gordon, who appears to be a godmother of Le Theatre Lesbien (she's listed on the program as director, fashion guide, and with Matrisha One Person and Madame Szwambi as "creator for the stage"), serves as the uncer. She continually stumbles her lines, all of which are far re sophomoric than Sapphomoric.

The level of the humor is demonstrated with the first walk-on: an amazon comes out with a silvery chest shield showing one breast missing. "She always keeps abreast of things," entones Gordon. And the "comedy" deteriorates from there.

Actually, the funniest aspect of the entire production was the sound system. Somehow it was picking up a radio talk show which, despite repeated attempts, could not be eliminated. The lines coming from the speakers were considerably wittier than Gordon's.



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